

**Para Todos
Facilitator Guide
DVD 2—Chapter 4
Inhalants, Prescription, and Nonprescription Medications**

Dear Facilitators:

This chapter provides warning signs that your child may be inhaling toxic substances or misusing prescription and over-the-counter medications to get high.

Chapter Goals:

1. Understand the dangers of chemical products used for inhaling and the misuse of over-the-counter medications or prescription medications.
2. Recognize the signs that these substances are being abused.

Suggestions for Guest Speakers:

To enrich the session, the facilitator could invite the following experts:

- Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor (LCDC)
- Psychiatrist/psychologist/social worker
- Emergency room physician
- Health educator
- Parent whose child has used drugs
- Pharmacist.
- Religious leader

VIDEO, PART I

Main Concepts:

The following concepts are presented in the first section:

1. Inhalants are harmful and can cause death.
2. These products can be found in our own homes.
3. It is important that we talk with our children and explain the dangers of inhalant use.
4. We need to always remain alert and constantly supervise our children in order to keep them safe.

Participants should understand the following important points:

- We need to help our children stay away from these dangerous practices.
- Resources are available to help our children avoid these dangerous habits.

Nora Volkow, M.D., Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, explains the dangers of using inhalants:

“Inhalants are chemical substances that exist throughout our environment, which unfortunately can cause intoxication similar to alcoholism. Some inhalants such as gasoline, glue, and nail polish remover are easily available and this enables children to begin using them at early ages.”

“The other problem is inhalants can cause death by cardiac arrhythmia or asphyxiation, as these substances can use the oxygen in the lungs. Therefore, the use of inhalants is very dangerous. The problem is aggravated because children are the ones using these drugs. Unfortunately, we see this problem across all ethnic groups, including Latinos, throughout the world. All children are vulnerable, especially those who do not have adequate supervision.”

According to Nora Volkow, M.D., inhalants damage the brain:

“The problem with inhalant use is especially serious because they produce feelings of euphoria, but they are toxic substances that damage the brain. For example, chemicals in these substances destroy what we call the brain’s grey matter.”

“Grey matter is what allows the signals to go from one area of the brain to another. As a result, people who use inhalants can go blind because the vortex visual connection can be damaged. Inhalants can also cause loss of sensation in some parts of the body or the ability to speak properly. Inhalants are very harmful to the brain.”

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION #20

Participants respond to the following question:

1. Let us discuss products and medicines that youth are using to get high.
2. How can we recognize the signs that our children are using inhalants or other medications?

Warning signs of inhalant use:

- Strange breath odor
- Chemical smells on clothing
- Slurring of words or disoriented appearance
- Acting drunk, incoherent, or dizzy
- Paint stains on the face, hands, or clothing
- Red nose and eyes
- Irritation around the mouth
- Nausea and loss of appetite
- Anxiety, irritability, or restlessness
- Bloody nose.

VIDEO, PART II—CONCLUSION

Main Concepts:

The following concepts are presented in the second section:

1. Certain inhalants can be used like drugs.
2. These products are poisonous and their use can result in death.
3. An increasing number of young people are abusing over-the-counter medications such as cough suppressants and cold medicine.

Common signs of nonprescription medication abuse:

- Hallucinations
- Disorientation
- Slurred speech
- Euphoria
- Lack of coordination
- Dizziness, stomachache, and vomiting
- Heart palpitations
- Shaking or fainting.

Besides nonprescription medications, some medications that doctors prescribe to control pain, insomnia, depression, or violent impulses also can be used inappropriately.

How can we prevent the abuse of prescription medications?

- Talk with your children about the dangers of using these medications.
- Do not allow your children access to these medicines.
- Pay attention to the number of pills contained in medication bottles.
- Confront children immediately if you notice that some pills are missing.

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION #21

Participants respond to the following questions:

1. Why is inhalant use so common among adolescents?
2. How can we prevent inhalant use?

Optional Activities:

Next, we offer suggestions for group activities that are not included in the video. If you would like to tell us how the activity worked with your group, or suggest ideas for additional activities, please contact us at webmaster@hablemos.samhsa.gov.

ACTIVITY #1: Inhalants

Goal: Teach parents about some of the chemical products that can be used by our youth.

- Divide the participants into two groups.
- Ask the participants to make a list of the most common inhalants.
- Ask a representative from each group to read the list to all the participants.

The following are some examples of common inhalants:

- Adhesives
- Glue
- Nail polish remover
- Markers
- Paint thinner
- Spray paint
- Lighter fluid
- Gasoline
- Liquid whiteout
- Household cleaners
- Deodorant
- Canned whipped cream
- Hairspray
- Refrigerants.

Note to Facilitator: Bring in examples of products youth could use as inhalants.

ACTIVITY #2: Signs of Inhalant Use

Goal: Learn the most common warning signs that a young person is using inhalants.

Divide the participants into two groups.

Ask participants to make a list of the most common signs that a young person may be using inhalants.

Ask a volunteer from each group to read the list in front of all the participants.

The following are examples of some common signs of inhalant use:

- Hallucinations
- Disorientation
- Slurred speech
- Euphoria
- Lack of coordination
- Dizziness, stomachache, and vomiting
- Heart palpitations
- Shakiness or fainting.